

Teen Parent Policy

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A teen parent is defined as an individual receiving Temporary Assistance who is under age 18 and is the custodial caretaker of a minor child. The definition includes the month in which the individual turns age 18. Following that month, they are no longer a teen parent.

Note: There is no minimum age limit for teen parents.

Referrals from the Family Support Division (FSD)

Effective September 7, 2005, FSD will refer ALL teen parents to the Career Assistance Program (CAP) – whether they are in school or not at the time of referral. This will include a one-time only referral of all teen parents who were receiving case management services from FSD prior to September 1, 2005 (referred to as “conversion” referrals). This group of individuals will be displayed first on the TA-Recipient call-in list and identified as “Teen Parent Converted” in the Referral Type column. This group of referrals should be sent call-in letters on a priority basis in an effort to get them enrolled by October 1, 2005. After the call-in letter is sent, these names will appear on the Mandatory call-in list.

For conversion referrals, the student status at the time of referral will be displayed on the program search screen with an indicator of “Teen Parent In-School: yes or no”. This information is to be verified and updated at the time of enrollment. Verification of enrollment must be obtained from the school, not the participant, and can be obtained verbally or in writing. Enter the school information, including enrollment date, on the “edit enrollment” screen.*

Effective September 7, 2005, FSD will also begin sending daily referrals of new Temporary Assistance recipients who are defined as teen parents and are determined by FSD to be employment and training ready. This group of individuals will appear on the TA Recipient call-in list following any conversion referrals and identified as “Teen Parent” in the Referral Type column.

For new teen parent referrals the program search screen will indicate the student status at the time of referral, along with the specific school information if the student is enrolled in school. This information should be confirmed every time there is a contact with the teen parent and updated as needed. If the status changes from not in school to in school, verification of enrollment, including enrollment date, must be obtained from the school, not the participant. If the status changes from not in school to in school, verification of last date attended must be obtained either verbally or in writing. * Changes in school information are made on the “edit enrollment” screen.

At the time school enrollment is verified in Toolbox, Toolbox will send an automatic alert to FSD verifying that the teen parent is in school. At that time FSD will stop counting the teen parent’s months of receiving Temporary Assistance toward the 60-month lifetime limit. Toolbox will also send an automatic alert to FSD when the teen parent’s school status changes from in school to not in school. Months of Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF) receipts will count toward the 60-month lifetime limit for teen parents not in school.

Work Activities

All teen parents without a high school diploma or the equivalent are required to participate in education as their required work activity. Where appropriate, enroll the teen parent recipient in a regular high school program. **Note:** If a teen parent is attending middle school or junior high school, enter that in the high school activity. In those cases where enrollment in a regular high school is not possible because of the participant's age, inability to function effectively in a high school environment, or other circumstance, enroll the participant in a high school equivalency or GED program.

In extremely rare cases it may be more appropriate to enroll an individual in vocational education rather than high school or GED classes. It is important that the teen parent work toward self-sufficiency, even if it is not in an educational activity. It remains the primary goal, however, to encourage the teen parent to complete high school or engage in other appropriate educational activities.

If it is determined that the teen parent is not willing or is unable to attend *any* educational activity, and is age 16 or over, it is allowable to place the teen parent in other activities, such as unsubsidized or subsidized employment. **Note:** Missouri law requires that children under the age of 16 must attend school, or be considered a truant.

The GreatHires! record of any teen parent who is not looking for work, as well as ANY teen parent under the age of 14, should not be published. (Select “Publish” on the GreatHires! record. Then select “Do not publish” in response to the question “Should we publish this resume? Ensure that this information is updated when a teen parent who is legally allowed to work in the State of Missouri begins looking for work.) This will ensure that the information on that teen parent will not be available to employers.

Consider attendance at high school as meeting the teen parent’s scheduled hourly participation rate, even if the actual attendance hours do not equal the required hours. If the teen is enrolled in GED classes or other educational activities, the actual hours of attendance must equal the required participation hours. If they do not, enroll the teen in additional activities to meet the hourly rate.

Allowable educational activities include:

- Job Corps;
- Home schooling; **Note:** This applies only when the teen parent is the student, not the teacher.
- Alternative secondary schools.

Note: See “High School” in Work Activities policy for more information.

The two-parent teen parent household is also required to participate in high school or other educational activities. If the teen parent (one or both) does not participate in an educational activity, they must participate in other activities at the two-parent rate.

Transportation Related Expense (TRE)/Work Related Expense (WRE)

Teen parents are eligible for TRE and/or WRE if they meet all requirements of the TRE/WRE policy. Do NOT pay TRE for teen parents in school who ride the school bus.

FSD will continue to pay TRE to eligible teen parents converted from FSD through September 30, 2005. Do not use CAP funds to pay TRE to eligible teen parents from this conversion group prior to October 1, 2005. Teen parents must enroll in CAP, participate in a countable work activity, indicate a need for transportation assistance and provide appropriate documentation of participation in order to be eligible for TRE.

“Child Under 12 Months” Exemption

A teen parent with a child under the age of 12 months may choose to be exempt from participation if:

- The teen parent has a high school diploma or GED certificate, and
- They choose not to continue their education.

During this time period their months of TANF receipt do not count against their 60-month time clock.

A teen parent with a newborn can be waived as temporarily disabled during the 12 post-partum weeks. This waiver can be used whether or not the teen parent is enrolled in school.

* Note that the screen shots attached to this policy do not include a field to enter the enrollment date or the last date attended. Updated screen shots will be provided as soon as possible to reflect that change.